304 925 teeth in their upper jaw. A glance at the animal caricatures in our own comic papers shows how human, almost too human even, the front teeth of our cattle, for instance, appear to us. It 304 should be remembered that horned animals, tame (goats and 825 sheep) as well as wild (antelopes), play an important role in the 794 religion of the Pangwe since they are linked with the moon because of their horns. The cult of the moon, however, is the cult /Figs. 156 and 157 appear here in the original text/ of the Evil One. Accordingly, mutilation of the teeth is a symbol of turning

Fig. 156.
Mutilation of a Front Tooth.
The shaded part is chipped off.

Fig. 157
Chisel used on Front Teeth.

away from the Evil One, of destroying any similarity to him. On the other hand, it simultaneously points to an increased similarity to the Good, that is, the sun (or God [e-sǎ-mbe], who manifests himself in the sun), and the teeth are shaped to be like its rays. The deformation of teeth, therefore, is not to form a real "point," which to the contrary, would be something unpleasant and bad (the root sǒ is in n-sǒ-ń I, "point"). (It may be that this is the reason some people knock out all or some of their front teeth.) Rather, the deformation only narrows the teeth and gives them the shape illustrated in Figure 156. The teeth are, so to speak, "stretched" and made to resemble a sun beam; from this comes the expression a sǎ-m-ǎn masǔn from a sǎ-m, "to stretch" (n-sǎ'-m-ba, "the row, the line," actually, "ray"). The widely current expression "to shape the teeth to a point" is accurate only if one does not take it too literally; the cutting edge is merely narrowed, not brought to a point. The expression "filing the 304 teeth," which one also encounters frequently, is inaccurate since

representations on the posts of the meeting house (for instance, the leopard biting a pig's tail).

The masks used for the moon cult have a purely religious significance, as do the clay figures of the various cults. Indeed, especially in the latter the plastic art of the native rises to achievements of significant, one might even say monumental, proportions, both in the actual physical sense of the word (I saw figures eight meters long) and in the sense that they represented the idea symbolically expressed in a striking manner.

262 Reinw. (mvā,ī IV Fang); Poiana poensis Waterh. (ojǎn); Lutra matschieei Cabr. (abǎn) and Herpestes melanurus Gray (nsǒm I); Elephas africanus Bl. (zǒk IV); Potamochoerus albifrons /187/ Du Chaillu (ngui IV); Bubalus (nīt IV); Tragelaphus knutsoni Lemberg (nkǒ'k I); Cephalophus longiceps Gray; sheep and goats with exception of the above-mentioned animals; Limnotragus gratus Scl. (žīb IV); Cephalophus callipygus Peters (mvin IV) and Cephalophus melanorheus Gray (ogbǔ,n).

B. Birds

1. Taboo for the initiated of the Mekang cult (women).

●[794] Guttera plumifera (Cass.) (nkǎ'n I) among the Fang.

2. ekī,-bondǔ'mǎn.

Himantornis haematopus (Tem.) Hartl. (nkū'lūngū' I); Milvus aegypticus (Gm.) (esī'ā'); Strigidae, especially Bubo species (ndžū,k I) and Syrnium nuchale Sharpe (akūn); Centropus monachus Rüpp. (dūgū' III) and Passer griseus (Vieill.) (myǎekū,m IV).

3. ekī,-abǔm or ekī,-mǒn.

262
843 (a) Because the bird lives in caves or hatches its eggs in secluded nests: Vinago calva (Tem.) (obǒn) and Columba unicincta Cass. (apfǒ'b) until the birth if caught in the next; likewise Calopelia puella (Schl.) (edūgebǒ'm); Capitonidae, for example, Gymnobucco (oyǒ Ntum), Buccanodon (eji'le), and Barbatula species (omvǒk); Indicatoridae (mī' III) and Picidae (ngǔ'megǒ IV); Bucerotidae, for example, Ceratogymna (ngūn I), Bycanistes (miēm IV), Lophocerus fasciatus (Shaw) (okogbwai), and Ortholophus species until the birth in case they are caught walled up in their tree hollow; Nicator species (ekǒ') until the birth if found in the nest; Sturnidae, for example, Lamprocolius species (kbǎ'n IV) and Pocoptera (mesǒ'lǔn IV) until the birth.

262 (Laur.) (nkŭ̄m I); the majority of snakes, with the exception of those species mentioned below.

3. ekī-abŭ̄m or ekī-mŏ̄n.

[843] Phython sebae Gmel. (mvŏ̄'m IV), until the birth (1); Grayia

[194] [184] 1. Among the Jaunde taboo for all those not initiated into the Sso cult.

smythii Leach (nsŏ̄k I), likewise.

4. No taboo.

Tree snakes (ajă'ń).

D. Amphibia

1. Never eaten.

Bufo superciliaris Blgr. (mvŭ̄ń IV); Bufo latifrons Blgr. (dzŭ̄n VII); Rana mascareniensis D. and B. (nkŏ'ń I).

2. ekī bonduman.

Rana zenkeri Ndn. (edžŏ̄); Hylambates species (akăbĕ III Ntum).

3. Not taboo, but eaten only by women.

Rappia species (obă't); Xenopus calcaratus Bchh. and Ptrs. (mĭ̄'nezŏ̄k IV).

E. Fish

1. ekī bonenga.

Large specimens of Clarias walkeri Gthr., since the women

262 3. ekī, abǔm, until the birth.

[843] Edible caterpillars (nkūn I) and larvae of the Rhynchophorus phoenicis Fabr. (fǒs IV) if found in the cocoon; edible termites (sūs me IV Ntum) because of the large belly.

4. Not taboo.

Edible caterpillars and larvae of Rhynchophorus when they are found in the open; dragonfly larvae (esɛ̄, -bɨ̄k), although then the child will urinate a lot, like the dragonfly larvae; common crabs and shrimp; the mussel Lanistes libycus var. bernhardianus (morelet) (alǒn).

All other lower animals are inedible.

[794] Of plant foods only the following are taboo (with the exception of those sacred to the cults, such as the Negro banana used at the Sso and Mawungu): the fruit of the atūlūm plant, which tastes horrible, and young mushrooms. These are eki mon since it is feared that children might develop spots on their skin like those on young mushrooms.

825 794 If we examine the deeper reasons why certain animals are never eaten or are "taboo," we find that there is a religious element involved, as well as a fear of the animals' way of life and their appearance, perhaps combined with dietary experiences.

794 825 794 Animals that are taboo for religious reasons may not as a rule be eaten by women and persons who have not been initiated into the particular cult, but where the cult is absent, there is no taboo. Thus, horned animals, which play a role in the cults of the Evil One with their conceptual connection between moon and horns, are taboo; among the Fang this applies to sheep and goats, and throughout the entire region to Cephalophus dorsalis (sǒ'). In the domain of the Ngi cult the gorilla (ngī) is taboo; the same applies, among the Fang, to the chimpanzee (worshipped in the cult of the Evil Ones, Bokung), the pig (an important animal in the Sso cult), and Neotragus batesi (odzū'ɛ') which is worshipped in a manner

825 784 794 corresponding to Cephalophus dorsalis in the Odschüe cult. The python /191/ (mvŏ̄n IV) is also taboo. We have learned of its relation to the phallus in the Sso cult among the Jaunde, who, as is mentioned in Volume II, page 45 /Ed., not translated/ have preserved in purest form the most ancient views concerning the Sso cult. Large specimens of the fish Clarias walkeri (ngŏ̄ IV) and Achatina snails are taboo since they evidently have some connection with the Ngi cult, although I am unable to explain in what sense. Finally, among the Fang, the meat of the guinea fowl is taboo for the initiated of the women's cult Nkang. This fact is especially noteworthy since in the men's cults it is usually just the other way around: the initiated are allowed to eat the particular cult animal, while the uninitiated are not.

In surveying the cults, the only animal we find omitted in the taboos is the elephant, which is worshipped in the Schok cult. This can only be explained by the fact that, because of the large quantities of meat it supplies, an exception is made, either voluntarily from the outset or, as seems more probable, through necessity, because it was impossible to guard the huge quantities of meat. For this reason, the women doubtless partook of it and soon noticed that its enjoyment involved no evil consequences of any kind.

The taboo against Sciurus wilsoni (kuē I Ntum) also seems to have a remote connection with the cults. In contrast to other squirrels, it lives in the swamp and on the ground, and its call is therefore interpreted: sŏ abŭm, bokūn abŭm, sŏ abŭm, bokūn abŭm, that is to say, Sso in the belly, Bokung in the belly, or, since both are mesŏ́m, "sins," simply: sinner and double sinner.

825 784 A number of other animals that are taboo are only indirectly connected with the cults; the taboo stems from older religious conceptions. Chameleons and lizards, especially Lygosoma fernandi, are never eaten because they are linked with death (see Vol. II, p. 30 ff. /Ed., not translated/). For young people, furthermore, the flesh of monitor lizards and crocodiles is taboo, in my opinion because both animals formerly played a more significant role in the religion of the Pangwe. The crocodile probably derived its significance from its habitat in the water, and the monitor lizard, its counterpart, from its habitat in trees and above

825 all from its characteristic of devouring crocodile's eggs (see Volume
784 I, page 273). Finally, turtles and poisonous snakes are taboo. We have encountered the turtle repeatedly in our description of the cults (see the Schok cult, Vol. II, p. 77 /Ed., not translated/, and the Bokung cult, Vol. II, p. 72 /Ed., not translated/) without being able to explain its appearance properly (1). The poisonous

[794]

1. In this connection it is particularly noteworthy that the turtle is the only animal which is prohibited for the initiated of a men's cult.

snakes with their sharply defined head (vipers!) have given rise to the comparison, penis = snake (see Vol. II, p. 32 /Ed., not translated/).

For other taboos it seems to be decisive that the animals lead a nocturnal life and that they have attracted the attention of human beings by their powerful, peculiar screech /192/ (see the prefix classes, Vol. I, pp. 27 and 28 /Ed., not translated/, the nocturnal animal, Vol. II, p. 36 /Ed., not translated/). Included in this category are alipeds, certain lemurs, the tree cony, the flying squirrel; among birds, the night rail Himantornis, the owls, and the West African blue-headed coucal.

Still further taboos seem to stem from the fact that the animals live in the house or near human dwellings and therefore belong, as it were, to the family. In this category we find the domestic rat and its sister, the African rat (edu) which is almost extinct in the Pangwe region, the parasite kite, and the sparrow, the agama, and perhaps also domestic lizards (Lygosoma reichenowi). For the rest of the prohibited animals, their repulsive smell or their ugly and peculiar shape enters in as a consideration. In this connection we should mention: the civet cat and the Herpestes species, with the exception of Herpestes melanurus, the shrews, all of them having a repulsive smell, the shrew otter (Potamogale) because of its peculiar appearance (half mammal, half fish), the scaly anteaters because of their armor, Sciurus pumilio, toads, and frogs. There
[831] is a quite remarkable, real fear of the inside of the elephant's tusks,

692 or judicial. We have sufficiently stressed the diffuse character of the latter. On the other hand, certain "associations" show an organization (which is often effective outside the clan) that fills (or attempts to do so) a compensating function. This is true of the Ngil, whose role of pacification and justice extends beyond clan limits — and in spite of these limits.

6. The Associations

769 794 We have frequently pointed out the rather loose nature of the bonds which exist between even close fragments of a clan. In Gabon, because of the extreme dispersal and entanglement of the divers fragments, the "periodic gatherings" disappeared very early. No mention is made of them by early authors, except for a vague one by Father Trilles. However, these gatherings (ésulan) have been kept up in the Cameroons with the purpose of reminding the members of their solidarity and having them show it by "helping one another in kind, with money, and with days of work." (1)

1. Tradition des Yénžòk [Tradition of the Yénžòk], Archives of Ebolowa, The Cameroons.

These bonds, however, are found to be tightened at the time of the initiation of young men to the Bièri cult when the society of grown men is also strengthened. Bièri, while borrowed, according to H. Trilles, "in its form from neighboring nations" yet "remaining basically Fang," is a cult rendered to the spirits of the [778] ancestors through the agency of their skulls. It necessitates for every nd'è bòt an altar set up in the hut of the eldest, or very near it. [142] It requires sacrifices (regular and circumstantial), and it has to be consulted before every important action.

This cult confirms the continuity of the line and reveals periodically the profound unity which constitutes the continuation of the generations — at the time of sacrifices of food, the food is first "consumed" by the Bièri, then eaten by the secluded initiates (mvoma bièri) assembled in the guardhouse. It imposes a large

769 number of prohibitions (with regard to the uninitiated and the
794 women) and obligations. It "separates" the initiated men, thus giving a privileged position — justified by the right to commune with the ancestors and to "see the Bièri" — to the most active elements of Fang society.

The initiation is particularly characterized (the culminating [276] moment of the series of ceremonies) by drunkenness produced by the plant alan, (1) which may result in long-lasting unconscious-

1. Strychnos icaja.

ness.(2) The newly initiated man at this juncture becomes certain

2. E. Trezenem, op. cit., III, Le Bièri, pp. 74-76.

that he has enjoyed a revelation and from then on is in communication with the ancestors. He experiences the fervor of a communion that binds him to the whole society whose effectiveness he discovers at the same time: he has in fact become the object of predictions that are always realized. (3) He asserts himself, if we

3. Cf. idem., p. 75: "All the Pahouins whom we questioned assert that predictions made to people drunk on alan by the bièri have always been realized.

may use the expression, as a full-fledged Fang. The Bièri cult assumes therefore the highest function of aggregation. We stress the fact that initiation is carried out in the same place for several of the nd'è bòt belonging to the same clan, thus strengthening the ties of kinship existing between closely related clan fragments, and tending to reconstitute, to make real, units larger than the individual groupings. On the other hand, initiation to this cult, [304 like circumcision (which takes place apart and appears to be 177] a recent acquisition of the Fang), creates groupings of young men who belong appreciably to the same age group. It emphasizes a link between generations (the "fathers" or "eldest" being

794 [769] those who give the initiation), which is important in traditional Fang society.

The grouping that forms the Bièri – which brings together full-grown men who take an integral part in the social life – remains closely linked with the system of kinship. It has, none the less, an important role which we have just pointed out, that is, [143] it establishes relations, which are most effective because they are religious, between elements of the same clan who do not belong organically [sic] within the limits of a superior unit which might have been the chefferie. But other associations have come into existence beyond the clan kinship and beyond the diversity, peculiarities, and antagonisms it provokes. The Ngil, with a multifunctional activity and with an aim to putting things in order at the time of crises and conflicts, seems to be the best known. (1)

1. Cf. Father H. Trilles, op. cit., p. 62. Captain Maignan, op. cit. Lt. Poupard, "Le Fétichisme et la barbarie au Congo [Fetishism and Barbarism in the Congo]," Renseignements Coloniaux, March, 1908. Above all, L.C. Leroux, Etude sur le Ngil [Study on the Ngil], Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, 6, 1925.

794 787 Members of the Ngil as such are guaranteed "in all places against attack"; they circulate "without the least fear of any outrage" among tribes that are in "open vendetta." (2) The Ngil –

2. L.C. Leroux, op. cit.

the word designates both the association and the masked man who operates in its name – "has the right to strike, wound, and even kill." The solemnity of his action is marked by the suspension of all life in the village when he arrives. The huts are closed, the fires put out, the women cloistered, and no inhabitant shows

794 himself in the interior courtyard. The final ceremony includes
787 the erection of a hollow clay statue (3) (also called Ngil) before

3. Cf. the description in the articles of Leroux, op. cit., and Poupard, op. cit.

which "all the inhabitants of the village and those of the villages of the same line" must appear, and whose function is to reveal the guilty ones (who have caused unexplained deaths or calamities from which the whole group has suffered, etc.). The intervention of the Ngil is sought in moments of serious crises. It calls for total action involving large groupings for whom it has a real therapeutic value: by determining guilt (impossible to contest because it is a matter of a superior and anonymous justice), by reinstating unity (on a passionate basis) at the time of the punishment, by re-creating a new vigor by means of this "purification."

794 The religious aspect of the "association" justifies such an
769 absolute, such an indisputable action. Unfortunately, we know little about it, except that certain dead are called upon by means of skulls, bones, and sacrifices, and that fertility rites are included
[831] when the Ngil has a female companion, Omore (1). [144]

1. H. Trilles, op. cit., p. 62, writes that "the new members must accomplish a number of actions connected with the act of generating before the statue of Omore ...," and Poupard speaks of "shameful ceremonies."

We have here a prevalent dialectic: a recourse to the social past — which is a true reservoir of endlessly accumulated powers — in order to instruct the social future and to fertilize it; the past and the future, the ancestors and the living are, like the generation of the ésa and that of the mwanö, in the relation of begetter to begotten. This movement expresses dependence and a certain social order. The intervention of the Ngil — but it is not the only

794 769 [171] one – tends to re-establish this elementary order, it is a reinstatement, a pledge of fertility and power. Apparently the Ngil resembles a great many other "associations" that have existed in Gabon, especially the Mwiri of the Ngounié people. (2) It constitutes primarily an instrument of struggle against the sorcerers (böyêm), to the extent that they attempt to interfere with the normal order. But it is much more than that: it is the indication of a power superior to that based on kinship, a grouping with a great capacity for control (doubtless the most powerful).

2. Cf. A. Maclatchy, "Organisation sociale des populations de la region de Mimongo [Social Organization of the Peoples of the Mimongo Region]," Bulletin de l'Institut d'Etudes Centrafricaines, I, I, 1945.

794 [535] [847] The Fang have known other associations of men with specialized functions – or rather those that create "specialists," such as the akûm, who directs the ceremonies linked with the male dance called makuma. The akûm, who appears also as a sort of chronicler-singer, intervening especially at the time of funerals and affairs concerning fertility (search for the "sorcerer" responsible for an abortion that might result in permanent sterility,(3) ceremonial intended to lift the incest which creates sterile marriages). The akûm in daily life is distinguished from the non-initiates by being subject to a number of special interdicts. He is a "respected, or rather a feared, person," for to him is attributed "great power." "In order to reach this situation he must have been [535 674] taught by another akûm; he must have learned the interminable songs that last a whole night long, and then with his own hand kill one of his close relatives...." (4) This brief description is

3. Cf. E. Trezenem, op. cit., p. 79.

4. Father L. Martrou, "Les Éki

• 794

des Mfang [The Éki of the Fang]." Anthropos, Vol. 1, 1906.

interesting for the last point it brings up; it indicates a test, it shows above all with unquestionable brutality that all power existing outside the clan and the kinship is acquired only after making the more or less symbolic gesture of "killing the kinship." It is by the interplay of [145] such groupings that the logic of the system of kinship and of alliance by marriage is transcended.

"Associations" have a function whose import varies according to particular circumstances. They intervene to create a better cohesion between clan fragments, as is shown by the grouping of [171] initiates at the Bièri (Gabon cult) or at the Ssò (Cameroons cult known to the frontier villages); this at a time when insecurity demands a minimum of union among related villages. In other circumstances, they attempt to reinforce the inherent power of functions whose importance is affirmed: as in the case of groupings that controlled the ancient "dance of justice" (sòmana) at the time when peaceful settlement of conflicts remained the only one possible, and when the role of "peacemaker" was of primary importance. As is shown by the feminine "associations," they may also act as a curb on the domination to which a social group of inferior status is subjected. This is all the more marked as the decay of these groupings has been paralleled by the change in the relations between the sexes. We have pointed out, in connection with the Ngil, that "associations" have acted as the mechanism for higher appeal for the purpose of pacification. We must now stress the fact that some of them assume an almost permanent role of opposition to the social order.

754 Such is the case of the "association" of men known as sorcerers 776 (pl. bòyèm), who endeavor to acquire permanently, and in their 782 own personal right, "wealth, strength, and power." Each one has been admitted in terms of an absolute differentiation – the possession of a "spirit" called évu(r) (s) which is physically distinguishable (1) – and with a special initiation, the latter entails the

1. Cf. H. Lavignotte, L'évur, Société

physically: "His tomb is neither above nor below, neither to the right nor to the left"), he divides his possessions, a division which is disturbed by quarrels, the machinations of younger sons or the negligence of the elder ones. He then departs beyond the river-of-the west, followed by the white men (or the coastal tribes?) who by a ruse have got hold of part of the biôm inherited by the Pahouin. The latter in turn start westward, crossing the Osoe Nnanga, then the nlôm adjap (hole in the silk-cotton tree) as described earlier (see p. 19).

Nzame (Zambe) is emphatically not the creator god but the ancestor = mentor; all genealogies go back to him. Yet all the Christian missions have taken his name to express the idea of God. This mistake has come about because the word Mebe'e was rarely spoken, while Nzame turned up in all "salutations," in everything that had to do with the ancestor cult. As the original monitor he could be confused with the creator — in fact, he in a way completed "natural" creation by the magical invention of the arts and crafts. As an ancestor he was solicited in prayers (meya'alan) by his descendants, while Mebe'e was not addressed except on rare occasions—in solemn vows, at initiations. Finally, the very fact of having been misled from the first /110/ made it difficult to go back to the first translation. It may well be though that this mistake, the substitution of the creature for the creator, the deification of man, has not been without influence on the social development of the Pahouin. The Mintangan, who actually came from the nlam bekôn, the land of the dead, brought with them a genuine theological revolution, a heresy to which their material wealth gave a sure guarantee. The psychological repercussions must have been considerable.

Nowadays one hears it currently said that "Mebe'e is the old name for Zambe," and the latter seems to be permanently established in his usurped role (1); the traditions connected with the two personages

1. Good, the first American missionary among the Boulou, was nicknamed "Ngôlô Zambe," Zambe's ransom, which may have been not merely an approximation of his name.

are inextricably mixed with Christian contributions, to such a degree that we may speak of a new theogony being formed in the syncretist cults and in some Christian schismatic movements.